

Mr. Powell has stated that he is seeking sound legal bases for retaining the FCC regulations governing media ownership. Not being from a legal background, I cannot provide such. However, as a concerned citizen, I feel I have a duty to comment on this. Statistics show that, in twelve years, the number of entities controlling the entire spectrum of the media shrank from fifty to ten. Surely the implications of such a trend go beyond the ideals of market competition. While the media certainly constitute business, they represent far more than that. They are the means of dissemination of information and ideas that allow people to remain informed and to form the opinions that shape the future. As fewer and fewer conglomerates assume control of broader and broader areas of information distribution, then what gets distributed tends to reflect the business ends of the owners, i.e. who gets interviewed, what books get reviewed. This, of course, is business. But it also by implication becomes information control. Now a newspaper or a radio or television station has a right to a political or philosophical bias. However, when a handful of entities control all the information, and the only views presented are those of the directors of media conglomerates that own all the outlets, what becomes of our freedom? In these times of heightened awareness and increasing anxiety, the public needs a broad range of information and viewpoints from which to select. It is not a question of politics, but the necessity to insure that the whole political spectrum is represented. The drafters of the original checks and balances on the media knew what they were doing. The threat of monopolies is not less now than it was then. Please consider the unique nature of the media in the marketplace and please don't undermine those very necessary checks and balances.